LONDON CLUBS FACE A CRISIS

Englishmen of Good Social Position Seek Only One Membership.

CITY IS OVERSUPPLIED

From the Start These Organizations Were Meant to Be Unsocial.

A serious crisis has been reached in the affairs of London clubs of those clubs that are the legitimate descendants of the coffee houses of the eighteenth century described by Addison and Steele in the pages of the *Spectator*. It has been impending for several years. In the last ten years at least London clubs of more or less good standing in their day have closed their doors, and now rumor has it that the same fate threatens several other clubs, some of which had gained in the century and more of their existence a reputation for stability.

As the New York clubs are founded on the same principles as those of London and a change of fashion there usually finds a response here it might be supposed that the same troubles which affect London clubs might be duplicated in New York. But that is not the case. All the principal New York clubs are in a flourishing condition financially and have long waiting lists. The conditions differ in the two countries.

One reason given for the unsatisfactory condition of affairs in London is that whereas a quarter of a century ago Englishmen of good social position belonged to several clubs, now they are satisfied with one. Consequently London finds itself oversupplied with clubs. There were men in those days who would boast that they could not walk from Apsley House along Piccadilly down St. James's street through Pall Mall and into Trafalgar Square without passing a club to which they belonged every two or three hundred yards. Consider for instance what may have been an extreme but not by any means an impossible case a few years ago.

A son was born to a man of wealth and social position who belonged to White's, Arthur's, Brooke's or Boodle's, as had his father, grandfather and maybe great-grandfather before him. As it took many years to get into these clubs he put up his son's name for one of them while the boy was wrestling with Latin and Greek syntax at Eton or Harrow. The youth went to Oxford for a short time and then entered the Guards. He had been elected a member of, say, White's, and of course also of the Guards, but as there is no mess at the Guards he also joined one of the many service clubs where there are dining rooms, the United Service or perhaps the Army and Navy, more generally known as "The Rag."

Having been to Oxford he naturally joined one of the university clubs. His father, entertaining hopes that when he was tired of soldiering he might stand for his county or some other county in the Tory interests, had induced him to become a member of the Carlton. The young man, having inherited a taste for gambling, was elected to the Turf Club, and he had no trouble in getting into the rather rowdy Raleigh, the scene of that famous story of a club servant returning a pocketbook full of Bank of England notes to the owner and saying:

"How lucky, sir, one of the members did not find it."

The reputation of the Beefsteak for good dinners and delightful companionship induced him to join that exclusive body, but he found some difficulty in getting into it. Then he was asked to join the Bachelors, a queer fashionable gathering place of men with undoubted social position, and lastly was honored with an invitation to become a member of the Marlborough, the club of his future sovereign, who was also honorary colonel of his regiment.

There he was with ten clubs for which he had paid about $1,500 in entrance fees and had to pay yearly subscriptions of, say, $500 more, besides the Christmas "boxes" for club servants. And in addition to those ten clubs, situated in the heart of the fashionable West End, he probably belonged to suburban clubs, to Hurlingham for polo, to a golf club—for the ancient and royal game was just beginning to take a hold on the Southrons. He was likely also to join some country club for tennis.

Radical legislation in the British Parliament has cut down incomes, and so one man one club has become the rule in London. Then the automobile has worked a vast change in social life there, as it has here. The country club has proved a strong rival to the city club. The change affects the London club much more seriously than it does the New York club, for the London club depends so much on its members who are men of leisure—a class of small importance here—who all day long are continually in and out of the clubs and so adding to the financial resources of the organizations. Nowadays these men get away from the stuffy streets, run out to some nearby country club, where they can get not only fresh air but their favorite out of door sport and enjoy feminine society, which is denied them in most of the town clubs. New York, that is Manhattan, has comparatively fewer clubs than London, allowing for the difference in population. This is easily accounted for. London clubland has a larger clientèle than any other city in the world. It is not only the capital of the United Kingdom but also its metropolis. Every member of Parliament belongs to a club there, one of his party's clubs, and most M. P.s to at least one more. The great majority of landed proprietors throughout England, Scotland and Ireland have their London clubs, even though they may visit the town only for a few days each year. Every army and navy officer belongs to one of the service clubs, every barrister has his club, all the Judges and most of the solicitors too have theirs. Then there are the rich manufacturers from the provinces and their sons to furnish other recruits to the clubs.

But in spite of this enormous supply of club material London clubdom finds itself in distress; while in New York, where not further back than the '70s of the last century clubs were anything but strong, they are now in a flourishing condition and have multiplied, but not so far beyond the demand.

Country clubbing has been mentioned as one reason for the London crisis; another may be found in the lack of sociability in its clubs. For centuries reserve had been the Englishman's boast, but the younger generation of Britons are dropping that, and no doubt the increased intercourse with the New World has much to do with this change.

The cold stare directed at a stranger is no longer good form. The Englishman began dropping that when dealing with foreigners. He is now even treating those fellow countrymen who are strangers to him to more of the milk of human kindness. He even wants to drop that mantle of reserve in his club. Sociability is what gave the breath of life to the New York club; lack of it has been stifling the London club.

The London clubs that are passing away were thoroughly characteristic of the Englishmen who founded them. The English were then a proud people who had a horror of indiscriminate association. They still have that pride and that horror, but in a less marked degree.

Then the English are both domestic and quarrelsome. They made their clubs comfortable without ostentation to remind them of their home life, and there is no place so eminently adapted to the indulgence of bad temper as a man's club.

Every club had its complaint book and the quarrelsome Englishman loved to help to fill it with line upon line of fault finding with the chef, abuse of the club servants or unfavorable criticism of the sherry. It acted as a vent to his ill temper, was as good a blow off as an indignant letter to the *Times* on the enormities committed by the Ministry or the thieving propensities of the London tradesman.

From the very day of their origin the great clubs of London were designed to be unsocial. White's and Brooks's were originally coffee houses, the one frequented by the Tories, the other by the Whigs of the early part of the eighteenth century. In those days the English rarely associated with any but members of their own political party. White and Brooks were induced to admit to their coffee houses only men approved by a committee formed of the most influential of their customers. Such was the origin of the London sociable though unsocial club.

For many years afterward all London clubs were proprietary, either owned by an individual or by a private syndicate. In the early part of the nineteenth century began the organization of the big clubs that now own magnificent palaces in Pall Mall and its immediate neighborhood. Most of them, such as the United Service, were founded strictly for economy's sake, in this particular case because after the close of the Napoleonic wars a host of British army officers had been retired on half pay, and many had little more than enough to live on. Indeed every one in England, outside of the army contractors, was more or less poor in those days and economy was the order of the day. The aristocracy, for instance, was so hard up that it could not afford to entertain. Hence the origin of the famous Almack subscription dances. Upon the lines of these early eighteenth century London clubs were founded the first clubs in New York, such as the Union, but the question of economy did not come up. Since then the New York club has developed on lines quite different from those of the London clubs.

The Englishman first seeks substantial comfort in his club. He needs a comfortable arm chair, where he may sit and read undisturbed; loud talking in a club is frowned on. The clubs are salons of silence. The furniture of the building is rich but unostentatious, pictures are almost unknown. The cuisine was very simple but good in former days. Nowadays it is more complicated. The wines are usually of the best and great attention has been paid to the cellars. It would have been impossible for a London clubhouse to be built, as was the New York University Club, without accommodation for casks, to allow the wine to improve in the wood.

Members ever were and still are strangers to one another, and although they may meet in the same town day after day and night after night for years, they remain strangers. A man is not even expected to nod to friends in his club. Such an individual as a president, to be found in every American club, is unknown to the English club.

And there being no president, there is no use to take the initiative in trying to make the club more social and more popular. One or two minor clubs in London devoted to the fine arts give excellent exhibitions, but such exhibitions as are held in the Union League, the Lotos and other well known New York clubs would be inconceivable in clubs occupying a similar rank in London.

The political clubs, which are much more important in London than they are here—the Carlton has a fund out of which it assists poor but deserving candidates to stand for Parliament in the Conservative interest—do sometimes entertain a Beaconsfield, a Gladstone, a Balfour or a Lloyd George; service clubs have given dinners in honor of "Bobs" and "K. of K." Brooks's redecorated its dining room to do honor to the Duke of Wellington after the battle of Waterloo, and in the same London season a ball was given at White's to the allied sovereigns and their suites.

That is about the sum total of public entertaining that the great London clubs have done in the last hundred years. They were bitterly averse to strangers, and they don't care for them much even now, though they are less bitter if they happen to be foreigners. It used to be a serious matter for a man who was at all nervous to have a card on a member of the United Service.

He was admitted just within the portals, and while his card was being delivered he was watched as if he were a dangerous lunatic or a notorious burglar by the suspicious eyes of every servant in the hall. If his friend was in he could talk to him only where he stood; no seat was offered him. The club now admits the stranger into a small reception room.

John Drew was in London when he received a notification that he had been elected to the Beefsteak Club, whose membership is restricted to 300 members. He was delighted, and as he was hastening to Leicester Square to take a first meal at his new club he met Dick Tobin of San Francisco. The actor imparted the news and invited the president of the Hibernia Bank to dine with him.

They arrived at the Beefsteak and ran across Stuart Wortley, the artist, who was horrified when he learned what John Drew had done. He had committed a dreadful offence. He had brought a stranger into the sacred confines of the Beefsteak Club! Something had to be done to save him from the stain of having broken one of the club's most sacred traditions. Stuart Wortley and one or two other old members put their heads together. At length it was recalled that it was the privilege of the club to entertain distinguished foreigners, and as a "distinguished foreigner" Mr. Tobin was permitted to have the privilege of dining in the club, although it would have been denied to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Norfolk, and even to the Prince of Wales himself.

What with the Magna Charta, backed by the Bill of Rights, every Englishman is jealous about the liberty of his person. He carries this jealousy into his club.

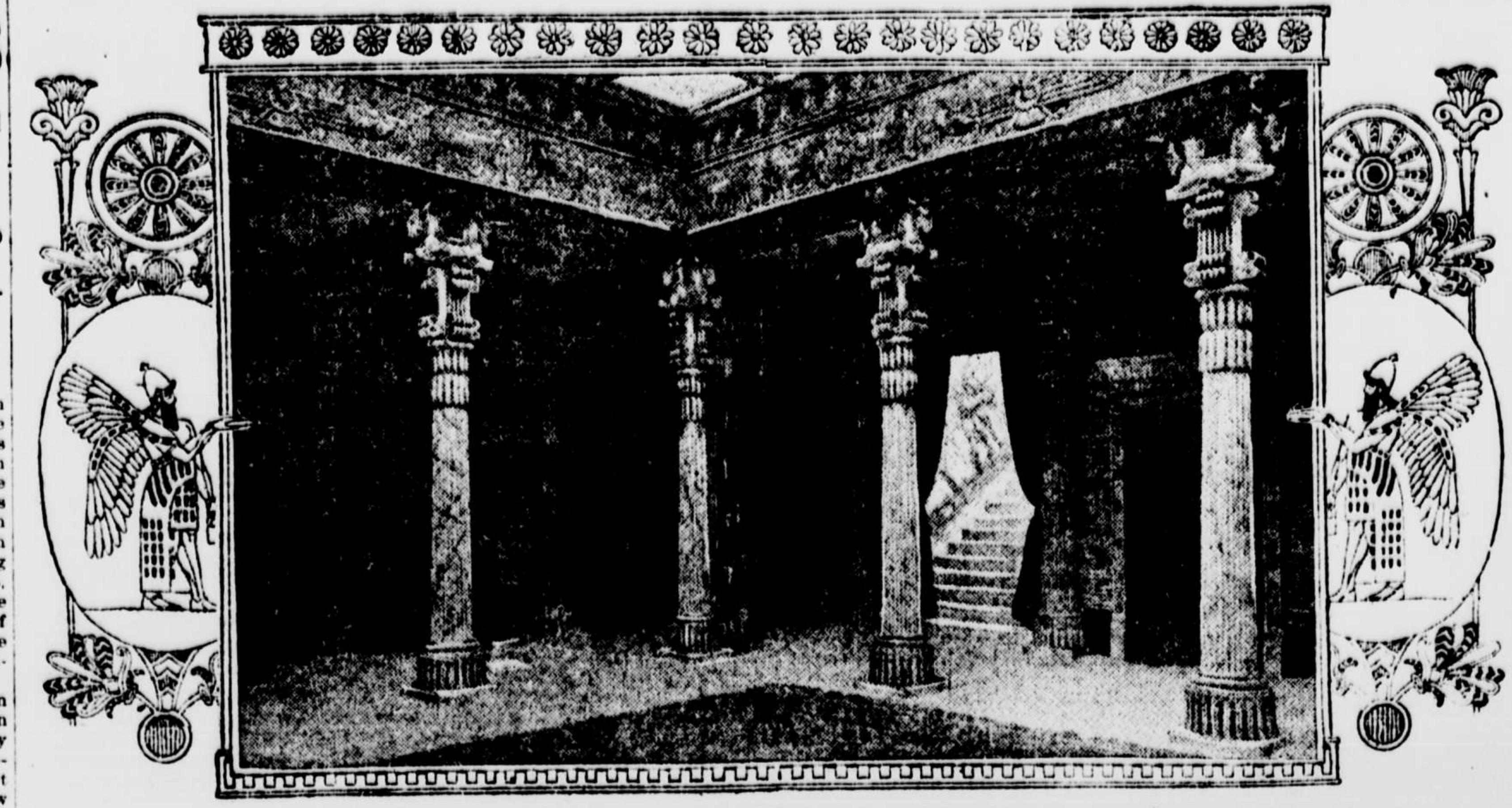
Outside of rent and service the expenses of a good London club are not much less than those of a first class club in New York. A chef there does not get more than from $1,000 to $1,500; here he will get four or even five times as much. The other club servants also receive much better wages in this country. The entrance fees are a little higher in New York than they are in London. Those of the Union and Metropolitan of this city are $250; the highest in London is $215 for the Naval and Military; for the Carlton, Athenæum and Marlborough $150, and for the Junior Carlton $35 more. The yearly subscriptions are less in London; as a rule about $50 for the high class club, while that of the Union is $150.

There is little difference in club prices between the two cities; the cuisine is as a rule better in New York than it is in London, but a dinner costs about as much there as it does here. The wines are cheaper and better in the London clubs.

In one thing the first class clubs in New York have an advantage over those of London; they are never empty. Take the Union and Union League for instance. There is one crowd that occupies them throughout the winter. In the summer its place is taken by men who are kept in the city by business and who have closed their houses here, their families being by the seaside, in country homes or abroad. In London from the beginning of August until the end of October the clubs are practically empty, are not fairly full until the shooting and hunting seasons are over, and are not crowded until after Easter.

To say that London clubland is doomed would be absurd, but that its size will be largely reduced in the near future is undoubted, and that reforms adapting the clubs to a progressive age will be introduced seems certain.

HALL OF HONOR COPIED FROM ANCIENT PERSIAN PALACE

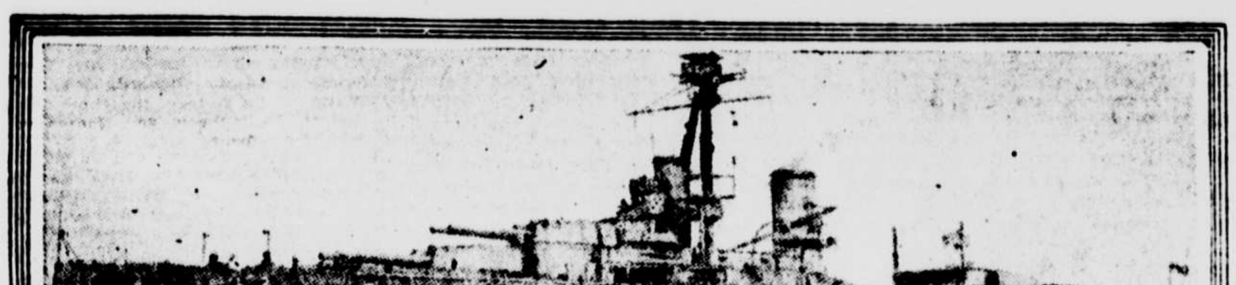


A feature of the house of Sir John Bland-Sutton, the London surgeon, is a hall of honor copied from an ancient palace in Persia. The apartment is noteworthy on account of its architectural features, and it derives additional interest from its historical associations. Besides having been the residence of Persian monarchs, the palace is one of the few buildings mentioned in the Bible whose ruins have been identified by modern research.

The apartment is an exact reproduction of the Apadana, or hall of honor, of the Palace Artaxerxes Mnemon at Susa. The palace was the largest of those built by the Achæmenid kings. Its ruins were discovered in 1896 by a French party of exploration under the direction of M. and Mme. Dieulafoy.

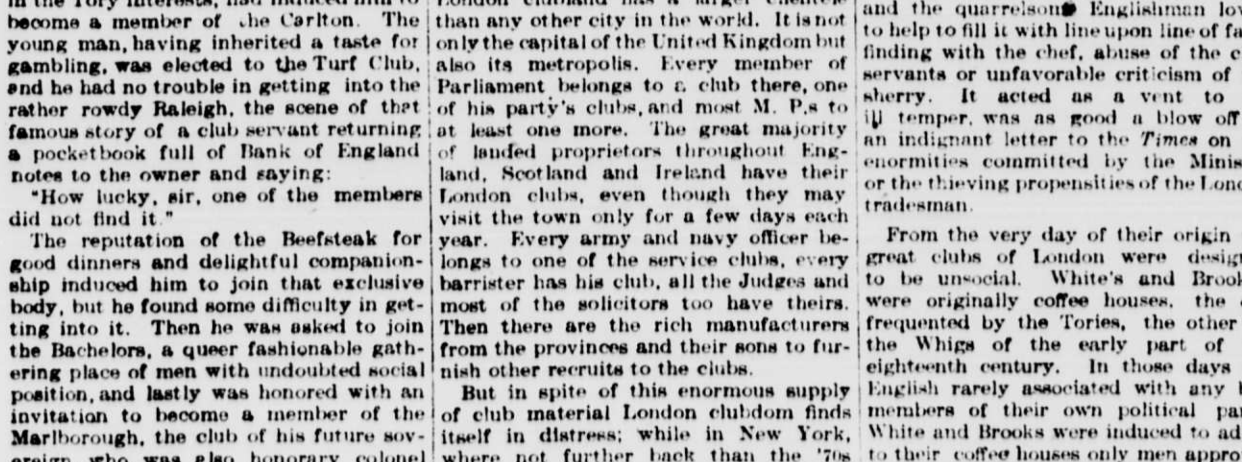
The columns in the hall are of marble. Heads of bulls surmount the capitals and are decorated with gold. The staircase leading out of the hall is also of marble and is ornamented with a bas-relief. The color scheme of the hall is ivory and cerulean blue.

FASTEST OF THE WORLD'S DREADNOUGHTS



For the British battleship Conqueror claimed the distinction of being the fastest dreadnought yet constructed. She completed her steam trials recently. Her speed, as shown on three runs, was 23.133 knots. The "true mean" speed is calculated as 22.13 knots. The officials of the British Admiralty declare that the Conqueror excelled the record of any foreign ship under similarly severe conditions.

SPORT WITH WATER SHOES IN GERMANY



Water shoes have supplied a new sport in Germany. Both men and women compete in races wearing these appliances. The water shoes are built in the shape of cylinders, conical at both ends. That they are light in weight is shown by the picture of the young woman about to launch a pair. The propelling is done with a large double paddle.

MODERN SEARCHLIGHTS.

Beams Pencil Shaped, Wedge Shaped or With Dark Core.

It was during the year 1862, in the American civil war, that Lieut. Cushing, by means of an explosive charge lashed to a spar projecting over the bows of a fast steam launch, blew up the Confederate ironclad Albemarle.

This was the first time that the torpedo had been practically used in belligerent operations, says *Cassier's Magazine*, and it marked the opening of a new epoch in naval warfare. It also made apparent the need for some means of detecting these small boats before they had time to get near enough to place the charge and fire it.

The first answer to this necessity was a piece of apparatus consisting of an electric arc lamp and a Fresnel lens, enclosed in a metal case, and mounted in such a way as to be capable of rotation in two planes, thus insuring the illumination of any spot.

About ten years later (in 1871, to be precise) Robert Whitehead invented the torpedo which bears his name. This torpedo, as is well known, is discharged from a boat when some distance away from the object of its attack.

Here arose a fresh complication, for although the arc lamp and the Fresnel lens answered admirably for the short ranges necessitated by the use of the spar torpedo, it was soon found that a boat could lie outside the zone of light and discharge a Whitehead torpedo without being seen.

Attempts were, therefore, made to obtain a more powerful beam of light, and these efforts culminated in the Fresnel lens being superseded by a glass mirror coated with silver. This remains the essential form of the modern searchlight. Numerous improvements have been effected, principally in the matter of the lamps, the mirrors and the control.

Although introduced primarily to meet naval requirements, the searchlight is not by any means unknown in the mercantile marine. At least one is provided for in the equipment of every up to date liner, and no ship is allowed to pass through the Suez Canal without one of a particular type (if the vessel has not one of her own she must borrow one from the canal authorities).

Again no steam yacht of any pretensions whatever would be considered to be complete if there were not a searchlight in its electrical equipment. Those steamers also which have occasion to navigate the large rivers of South America and of the continent of Africa and the great inland lakes of North America find a searchlight invaluable.

In determining the power of a searchlight the moon is a basic quantity. It has been found that the moon gives sufficient light to make a torpedo boat easily distinguishable at a distance of 1,000 yards. The most powerful source of artificial light in general use at the present time is an electric arc taking a current of 150 amperes. There are more powerful lamps which take even as much as 250 amperes, but they are not in general use. The 150 ampere lamp is generally placed at a height no greater than sixty feet, at which elevation it makes available less than half the candle power represented by the rays of the full moon.

This amount was first increased by placing a conical mirror beneath the lamp. Still a large part of the light was wasted, many of the rays being reflected into the sky, where they were useless to the observer. This led to the invention of the present almost barrel shaped projector. The interior mirrors condense the light into a beam which is very powerful and spreads only slightly. The projector can be rotated, lowered or elevated at will, so that any desired area can be gone over with this tremendous beam.

Although glass is a material which will take a very good polish and is for that reason always now used for searchlight mirrors, it was a long time before it was possible to manufacture glass parabolic mirrors with any degree of accuracy. Hence for some time mirrors of this form were made of metal, the particular metal being an alloy known as speculum metal.

About the year 1876 Mangin found that if a spherical mirror instead of being of uniform thickness throughout were made in the form of a concavo-convex lens, thus making it thicker at the edges than in the middle, there was practically no spherical aberration.

This was a great advance, and the Mangin mirror came very much to the fore. Ten years later, however, Schuckert was successful in his endeavors to make a parabolic mirror out of one piece of glass, and after that the glass parabolic mirror became the mirror in practice as well as in theory.

There is, perhaps, no property of the searchlight more important than its capability of throwing a powerful and concentrated beam of light in any particular direction. But the concentrated beam is not always the most desirable. There are times when a beam of light well spread out over a large area would be of very much more use.

Take, for instance, the case of a steamer trying to pick up a buoy. It is not very difficult to see that with a concentrated beam having quite a small amount of dispersion it would in most cases take more time in spite of the more powerful light than it would with a less powerful light spread out over a larger area. Having once spotted the buoy the concentrated beam could with advantage be used to follow it up. To provide this dispersed beam a diverging lens or disperser is used.

This consists of a number of cylindrical lenses mounted in a metal ring. The direction of the ray is not interfered with in the direction of the axis of the lens, but in the direction at right angles to the axis the ray is refracted or bent in precisely the same manner as in the case of an ordinary spherical lens. The result is that instead of a cone of light having a focal point there is a wedge of light with a focal line.

One particular type of searchlight, that used in the Suez Canal, is especially interesting to Panama building Americans. The Suez Canal regulations stipulate that the projector shall be capable of giving the required light under two different conditions. In the first case when no vessel is approaching a concentrated beam of light uninterruptedly illuminating both banks of the canal is required.

On the approach of a vessel being noted, though, the concentrated beam in order that the navigation of the approaching ship may not be interfered with must be split up in the following manner: The angle of divergence of the beam must remain unaltered, that is the width must be the same as that of the concentrated beam, but there must be a dark interval of five degrees extent in the middle of the beam. This dark interval is, of course, to prevent those in charge of the approaching vessel being temporarily blinded, with results which can be imagined better than described.